2020 Annual Report

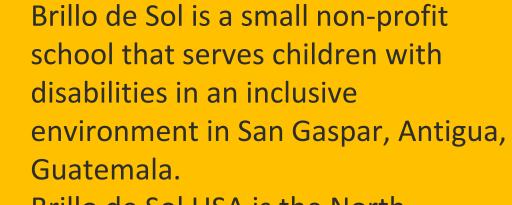




brighter lives for children with disabilities



About Brillo de Sol

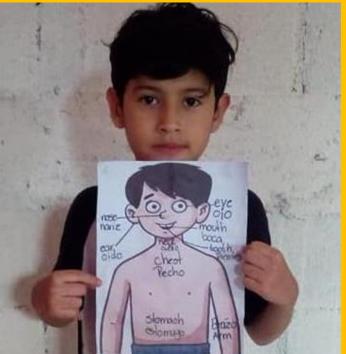


Brillo de Sol USA is the North American partner of the Asociación Brillo de Sol Guatemala.

Our mission is to support and advance the education, health, and quality of life of children with special needs and learning disabilities in Guatemala.











Christiane Dechert

Board President, Brillo de Sol, USA

As 2020 is drawing to a close, I let out a long sigh. It has been a difficult year for all of us, probably one of the most difficult ones in our lives, as COVID-19 caused substantial changes in our lives. With the incredible support of our most generous sponsors, we were able to support our partners Asociación Brillo de Sol Guatemala with 50 tuition sponsorships this year, which kept instruction and learning going online. Thank you for your continued support and standing by our side in these difficult times.

Of course, our lives and the difficulties we experience do not compare with the challenges that the people of Guatemala are facing. Guatemala is one of the poorest countries in Latin-America. Almost 60% of its people live below the poverty level. 70% of indigenous Maya live below the poverty level. Guatemala has the highest rate of malnutrition in the Western Hemisphere. Without opportunity to benefit from trade with tourism around Antigua, our children and their families were at extremely high risk to suffer from hunger and malnutrition. You came to their rescue. Thank you to all who donated to our Family Relief Fund that allowed us to feed our children and families living in poverty and extreme poverty for a while.

We hope that we will return to some degree of normality in the near future, Our Brillo children deserve to grow up with security and the experience of joy when learning with each other.

Chini Have Serbert

Letty Lopez

Founder / Executive Director

A different year worldwide ... so many challenges for the education of our children. I think that in our country, we were the school that had the most challenges. How to continue to provide personalized distance education? How to work with families that do not have technology at home? How to instruct parents to use special methodologies? But above all: how to replace hugs and kisses and the physical contact that has always been our best rehabilitation therapy? I profoundly thank our teachers, volunteers and Board of Directors for joining me in this challenge, for their concern and their ideas in finding solutions. Thank you to our sponsors and special donors - because of you, our teachers and staff kept their salaries, and remarkably, we were able to provide months of food to the families most in need. When we visited their homes, we were not only delivering food, we were also bringing hope and your love.

We were creative in our teaching methods, involving the whole family, while learning experientially through life skills and the arts. We all learned new technology!

Thank you for not letting go of our hand in these difficult times! We look forward to the next year of teaching our children with love,





Brillo de Sol USA

Board of Directors

Meet the hard-working members of our board



Michael Fraas



Elisa Udaskin



Ravi Srinivasan



Sujatha Srinivasan



Joe Phebus



Sabrina Cooper



Brian Nocella



Stephen Cooper



Christiane Dechert

Brillo de Sol USA

Brillo de Sol, USA, Inc. is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, supporting and advancing the education, health and quality of life of children with special needs and disabilities in Guatemala, including:

- ☐ Fundraising, educational and other support to:
 - Provide scholarships and other direct tuition assistance to children attending Asociación Brillo de Sol School, a registered Guatemalan non-governmental organization operating a school for children with special needs located in San Gaspar Vivar, in the municipality of La Antigua, Sacatepéquez, Guatemala.
 - Provide funding to Asociación Brillo de Sol for capital expenditures, instructional expenses of the school, and for administration of other programs designed to promote and foster special education teacher training and services.
 - Educate and provide information to the general public about the educational, social, and health needs
 of families and children in Guatemala.
- ☐ To recruit and coordinate the efforts of volunteers and professionals from the USA and Canada to assist Asociación Brillo de Sol and its partner organizations in providing educational and health services to children and families in Guatemala.
- ☐ To promote and improve the Education and Health of indigenous communities in Guatemala and to cooperate with other agencies or groups delivering education and health services that augment or support Asociación Brillo de Sol's programs.

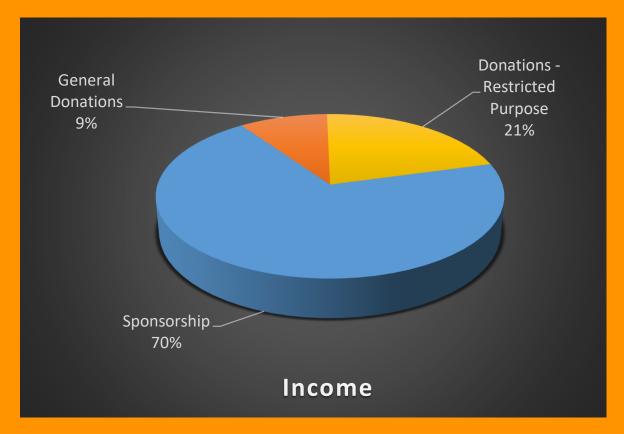


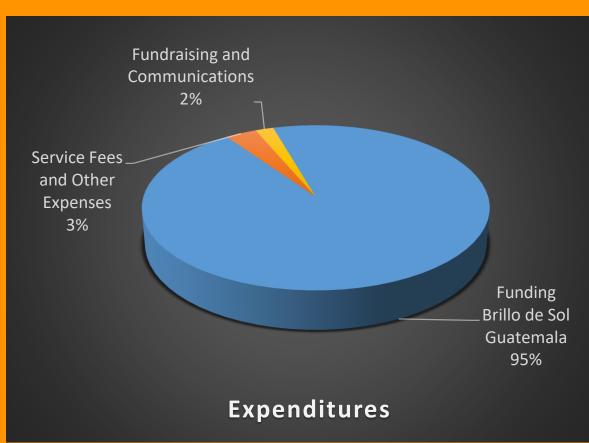


2020 Highlights

- **Tuition Sponsorship** in 2020, due to the generosity of sponsors from all over the world, we were able to fund the tuition for 50 students. These funds were used to serve the vast majority of Brillo students through innovative teaching methodologies online and in person.
- □ Family Relief Fund For six months this year, Brillo de Sol USA raised extra funds to provide the basic foods for Brillo families at risk of hunger and malnutrition.
- Breakfast Club Our Breakfast Club continued to feed our students every morning until school closed in mid-March. With the help of volunteers, teachers and our generous sponsors who helped with the donation of the food supplies, in the first part of the year, our children had a full stomach at the beginning of the day.
- Your Support Has Made an Impact In addition to sponsoring the students' schooling, your combined donations have enabled us to purchase a stable recess structure and some furniture for the library.
- □ **Transportation** Until mid-March, our donors allowed us to fund several transportation projects, including bringing children to the Carpentry Project where upper elementary and middle school students could begin to learn a trade.

Financial Report





Brillo de Sol USA

Statement of Income and Expenditures Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020

<u>DONATIONS</u>		
General Donations	\$ 4,485	9%
Restricted Purpose	10,038	21%
Sponsorship	33,150	70%
TOTAL INCOME	47,673	100%
EXPENDITURES		
Disbursement to BDS Guatemala:		
Discretionary Funds	1,720	4%
Designated Purpose - Other	6,914	14%
Family Food Campaign	3,400	7%
Sponsored Students - Tuition and Fees	33,480	70%
Total Disbursements to Brillo de Sol Guatemala	45,514	95%
Fundraising Fees, Website, and Communications	922	2%
Service Fees and Other Expenses	1,588	3%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	48,024	100%
NET INCOME(LOSS)	\$ (351)	0%

Student Sponsorship

Sponsors Children with disabilities have few options for their education in Guatemala. It is even harder for children from poor families to obtain schooling and occupational training. Sponsors give our children the gift of an education and a chance in life. We gratefully thank each of you.

Full Year Sponsorship (\$700/year)

Azlia Irny Amin

Janice Badder (2 Students)

John Bullett

Maryann Bullett

Dafna Carr

John W. Dayton

Christiane Dechert

Chris English

Amy Fox

Michael Fraas

Francis Gray

Heide Harm & Abby Wolford

MaryJo Hidecker Barbara Hunter Chris Kirshbaum

John McFadden (3 Students)

Ellen Maxfield & Gary Nagel

Brian and Colleen Phebus Joe Phebus (2 Students)

Patricia Phebus

Sharlene T. Reynolds

Nicole Robbins

Jenny Simms

Suja and Ravi Srinivasan

Elisa Udaskin

Ira and Vimi Udaskin

Kathy White

Half Year Sponsorship (\$350/year)

Lillian Cabrera (6 Students)

Ellen Christianson

Sabrina Cooper (3 Students)

John Dayton

Christiane Dechert (2 Students)

Abby Dickmann

Jacob Gates

Julianne Ghiglieri

Roberta A. Jackson

Maria Encarnacion Martínez Ibañez

Blaine & Stephanie McBurney (3

Students)

Ellen Maxfield & Gary Nagel

Julia Navarro Espinal

Brian Nocella

Leo Olper

Sandra Olper

Erin Perez

Jennifer Perry

Joe Phebus (2 Students)

Michelle Powell

Carly Reiser (2 Students)

Irene Saletan

Riley Scott

Rachel Stankey

Sara Stankey



Thank you also to all the generous sponsors who give directly to Brillo de Sol in Guatemala.

Acknowledgements

Donors We are grateful to all who support us with contributions. Your donations help us to purchase instructional materials and equipment, maintain our facilities, fund the Breakfast Club and provide transportation and other assistance to children whose families could not otherwise afford them.



Donors \$2000 +

Kathy Davis Howard Family Charitable Fund

Donors \$1000 to \$1,999

Jane Benson John Dayton

Donors \$700 to \$799

Steven & Sabrina Cooper Network for Good (Facebook)

Donors \$400 to \$399

Francis Gray

Donors \$300 to \$399

Christiane Dechert Nina Lorch & Andrew Mulcahy Chris Kirshbaum Ellen Maxfield & Gary Nagel Ravi and Suja Srinivasan

Donors \$200 to \$299

Maxime Blais Jennifer Fisher Norma Gardiner **Cathy Howes** Letty J. Manne Joe Phebus Caroline Price Karen L. Stewart

Donors \$100 to \$199

Janis Badder John and Maryann Bullett **Guneet Chawla** Ellen Christenson & Irene Saletan Kara Faraclas Roberta A. Jackson Christine Jau

Bill Mackey Brian Nocella

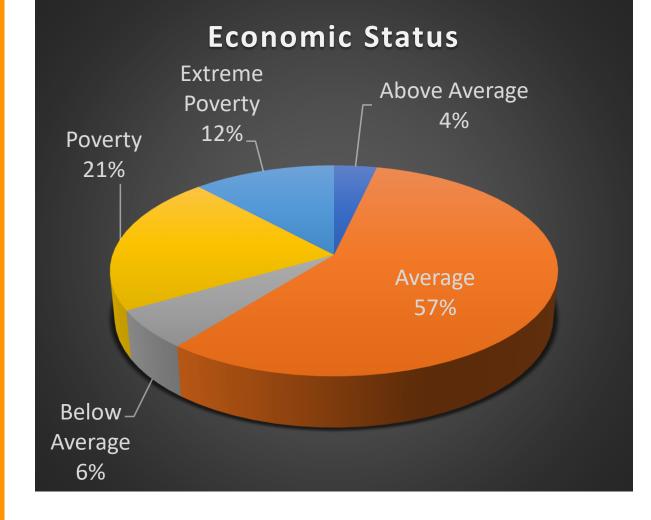
Susie and Kevin Roche Charitable Fund

Katina Watson Kathy White Matthew Wolf

Donors \$1 to \$99 BLJ Peter Praveen O Chaparala Jason Cooper Anne M. Reiser Paula J. Messamer Michael Fraas Elisa Udaskin Karen L. Carlson Marc Cooper Mireya Espana Jeffrey Michaels Alexandra Morimoto

Larry Reiser **Judy Sadlier** Kristen Farmer Stan Udaskin

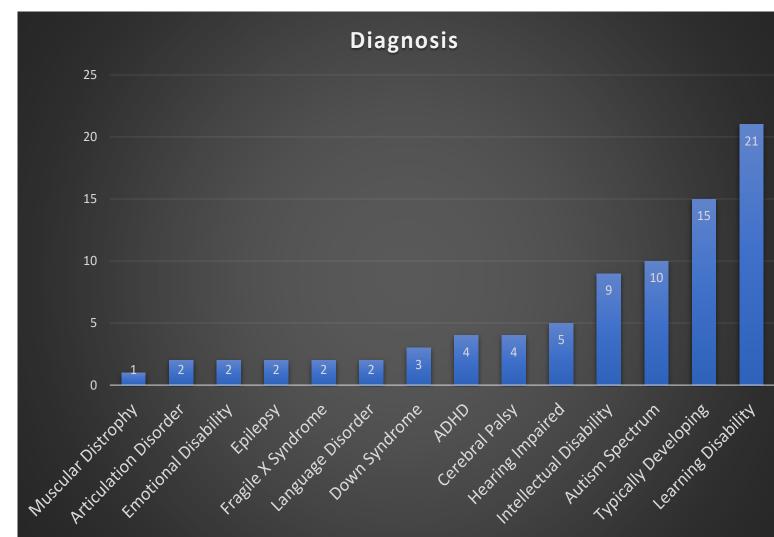
Our Students



40% of the children attending Brillo de Sol are from economically disadvantaged families, even before the COVID-19 epidemic. Without sponsorship or other financial assistance, these children would be unable to attend school and receive the therapies and specialized education they need to make progress on their curriculum and goals.

COVID-19 has further stressed the families of our students. With the loss of jobs, income, and other sources of livelihood, many of the families with previously sufficient resources have now fallen into poverty.

Our students have a variety of medical and educational diagnoses, comprising a broad spectrum of cognitive, physical and emotional disabilities, all requiring specialized teaching methodologies. Many children have intellectual skills within the normal range, but nutritional deficits, or delays in starting school due to family situations which have prevented them from learning in traditional classroom settings. Teachers in public schools are not trained to identify children in need of special education in the Guatemalan public education system and they are often teaching classes of 50 or more students.



Together until March

The school year 2020 started in January and the Brillo children and teachers spent a few weeks together at the beginning of the year. On March 16, 2020, all schools in Guatemala closed, the country was placed under a strict curfew and education was provided virtually. Few people predicted that the pandemic would last for the rest of the year. The few weeks together at the beginning of the year laid the foundation of the curriculum at Brillo de Sol this year.







A partir del lunes 16 de marzo quedan suspendidas las clases de todos los niveles, modalidades y sectores, como parte del

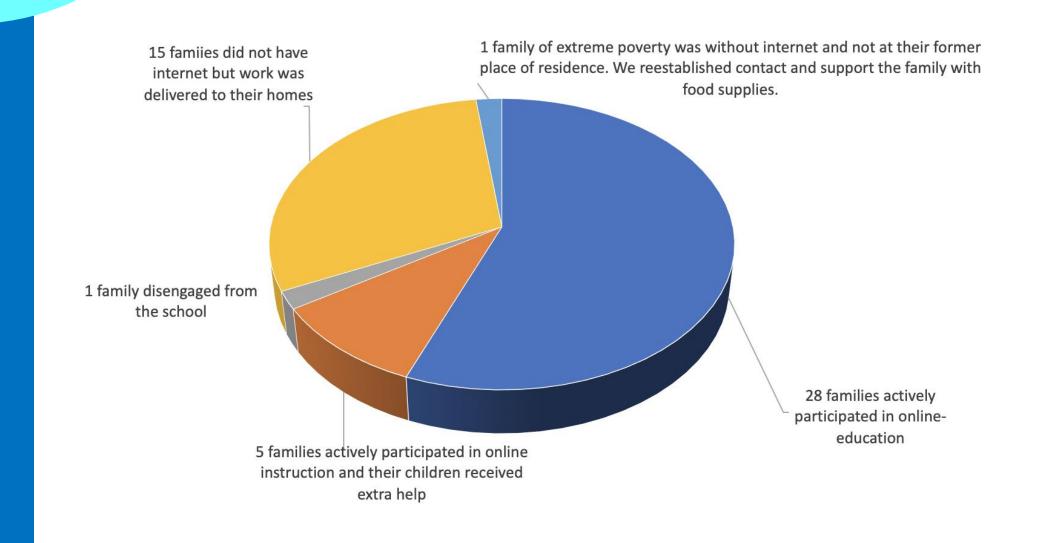
PLAN DE RESPUESTA

contra el coronavirus.

Access to Education

During COVID-19

Serving the educational needs of all children at the school, the Guatemalan Board of Directors developed a plan for families with access to internet, families without access to internet, and for children with extra learning needs. We are happy to report that all but two children sponsored by Brillo de Sol USA made progress in their education this year, despite the great logistical challenges.



RECUPERANDO EL APRENDIZAJE EL PLAN PASO A PASO SE DETECTAN Y LAS **RAZONES DEL AUSENTISMO NO PODER PAGAR** NO ACCESO A REDES ENFERMEDAD O DEPRESIÓN SIMPLE DESINTERES 1. COORDINADORA CREA **UNA CARTA INFORMANDO QUE ESTAN EXONERADOS EN EL AÑO PERO QUE NO** ABANDONEN. **NO ACCESO A REDES** INICIA DE URGENCIA LA CAMPAÑA DE PADRINOS DE REDES. SE LE CONTACTA PARA SE HACE CARTA PARA INFORMAR DICHO APOYO. **DESINTERES DEPENDIENDO DEL** CASO, SI YA SE **AGOTARON TODOS** PASO FINAL: LOS RECURSOS SE LE **DOCENTES** DA DE BAJA. **REALIZAN VISITA DOMICILIAR** PARA ENTREGAR CARTAS, CON LA ORIENTACION DE COORDINADORA Y VISTO BUENO DEL DIRECTOR.

DEPRESION:

APOYRLE Y DARLE APOYO Y TRATAR DE RECUPERAR AL ESTUDIANTE.

Brillo de Sol

Using available resources, teachers and parents implemented project-based learning opportunities across the curriculum: in academic subjects such as math, social studies and language arts, as well as in the arts.



Hands-on Learning

Our Families

Our families quickly rose to the challenge of the pandemic.
Everybody stayed at home and when going out, quickly adapted to wearing masks. The livelihood for many families in and around Antigua is related to the tourism industry. When tourism stopped in mid-March, many of our families lost employment and risked food insecurity. When Brillo staff and administrators began delivering food, families gratefully accepted their help.





Our Parents Became Teachers

During the pandemic, the structure and routine of attending classes at Brillo de Sol shifted as everything shut down. Parents now had the task of continuing their children's education at home with the guidance of the hard-working teachers. In the beginning, it was not all smooth sailing with technology issues and a lack of supplies, but eventually it became easier. Parents were creative and resourceful in helping their children complete their lessons. The participation of family members encouraged interaction, which helped students, regardless of their abilities, adapt to virtual learning. Also, through hand-on and experiential learning: cooking, building, arts and crafts, the students were able to advance their studies and complete the school year successfully.

A translation of a note from one of the parents:

"Thank you for giving my child the opportunity to grow and learn in a safe, friendly environment. We have great emotion seeing our son smiling and being happy, a new person all together. Even with the challenges of not going to school, we have had all the support needed to help him with his studies."

Volunteers

During COVID-19

With the country closed to foreigners and the curriculum being delivered online, a formerly integral part of Brillo's program, the volunteer participation in the teaching and operation of the school, ceased to exist. While a few volunteers managed to visit before March, most could not enter the country and sadly had to cancel their trips this year. Typically, volunteers from North America and Europe bring enthusiasm and expertise and provide one-on-one tutoring and attention. They often bring gifts and vital extra funds as well and leave with a great affection for the children and their time in Guatemala. This year, many of the parents fulfilled the role of the volunteers, at home, supporting the teachers in virtual learning and providing our students the necessary extra care. Our every hope is to see a return to normal volunteer participation sometime in 2021.





Our Tribute to Eddie Dodge

In July, we learned that Eddie Dodge, our dear friend and long-term Brillo de Sol volunteer, passed away very suddenly — a victim of COVID-19. For the past nine years, Eddie and his partner, Wendell Fjeld, taught English and computers to Brillo de Sol students. Eddie and Wendell were also always on hand to help with field trips, special events and other school activities. Eddie and Wendell provided loving guidance to the Brillo students, including taking some of the boys without dads under their wings and providing fatherly advice and support. The one-on-one help to students needing individualized help was a tremendous help to the teachers. Eddie will be sorely missed by us all. His ready smile, enthusiasm, and wonderful sense of humor were an inspiration to all.



In a typical school year, there will be a steady stream of visits by sponsors, university faculty and students, and volunteers. This year only a few of our US sponsors were able to visit, rekindle the relationship with their sponsored children, and bring gifts.





University Relations

Faculty and students from the University of South Carolina were the lucky ones this year. They visited Brillo de Sol right before spring break. Many other trips from partner universities had to be cancelled this year.



The Library

While students were learning at home, volunteers repaired the roof over the library, made it watertight, and removed the many pigeon nests! Brillo de Sol USA purchased new library seating that we are sure children will appreciate once the school reopens. In the meantime, a new check-out system was implemented, so students can now enjoy our books at home.